

Clean Water after a Disaster



General

After a major storm you must assume that all water sources are contaminated until proven safe.

Purify all water used for drinking, cooking and for washing eating and cooking utensils. Also purify the water used for washing hands, body and kitchen and bathroom surfaces.

Do not use water that has a dark color, an odor, or contains floating material.

To disinfect water, use **ONE** of the following methods:

1. Boil at a rolling boil for 10 minutes.
2. Add eight drops of liquid chlorine bleach (such as Clorox) per gallon of water. Make sure the bleach has no active ingredient other than 4 percent to 6 percent sodium hypochlorite.
3. Add 20 drops of 2 percent iodine per gallon of clear water or 40 drops per gallon of cloudy water.
4. Add water purification tablets according to directions on the package. These tablets can be bought at most drug and sporting goods stores.

Thoroughly mix these solutions and let the water stand for at least 30 minutes before using. To lessen the flat taste of boiled water, pour the water back and forth several times between two clean containers.

Always use clean or purified water to wash any parts of the body that have come in contact with surfaces contaminated by flood waters.

Water in water pipes and toilet flush tanks (not bowls) is safe to drink if the valve on the main water line was closed before the flood.

Based on information developed by Clemson Cooperative Extension following Hurricane Hugo. Revised for Virginia audiences by Virginia Cooperative Extension.

For more information, contact your local office of Virginia Cooperative Extension.

Publication Number 490-301, August 1996